

# MONTANA AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

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## State of Montana Brian Schweitzer, Governor

*Issued Cooperatively by*



Montana Department of Agriculture  
*Nancy K. Peterson, Director*  
303 N. Roberts, Room 317  
Helena, MT 59620



U.S. Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service  
*Ron Bosecker, Administrator*  
Washington, D.C. 20250

*Compiled by*

## USDA, NASS, Montana Field Office

Peggy Stringer, Director  
John Hilton, Deputy Director  
10 West 15th Street, Suite 3100  
Helena, MT 59626-3100  
(406) 441-1240 or 1-800-835-2612  
e-mail: [nass-mt@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass-mt@nass.usda.gov)  
website: [www.nass.usda.gov/mt/](http://www.nass.usda.gov/mt/)

### Estimates Section

Thomas Chard II  
Wendy Bruski  
Kim Haughee  
Christel Pachl  
Ron Schumacher  
Eric Siebens  
Billye Vincent

### Administrative Section

Annette Ronningen  
Retta Johnson

### Survey Section

Jodie Sprague  
Bonnie Heller  
Toby Paterson  
Carmen Pennington  
Carol Stefely

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### AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS .....

**Comments from  
the Governor**



I am proud to be a part of Montana's agriculture industry. For years, this state has ranked among the top producers of cereal grains, beef cows, sheep and lambs. The state's leadership position also extends to lesser-known crops including dry peas, lentils, flaxseed, honey and sugar beets. And, our producers are leading the way in establishing new oil seed crops such as camelina that hold potential for biofuels and industrial lubricants.

The Montana Agricultural Statistics book has been invaluable to me as a farmer and rancher. I use it now as I work to promote Montana products and the state's potential in the agriculture industry.

I am committed to working with you and all Montanans to grow our economy and move Montana forward. Your personal interest in agriculture, and commitment to add value to our agricultural products is a value I share. I welcome your ideas as we all look to identify opportunities. Please feel free to visit our website at [governor.mt.gov](http://governor.mt.gov) or give us a call at 406-444-3111 and please stop by when you are in Helena – the door is always open!

.Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Schweitzer". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "B" and a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Brian Schweitzer, Governor

MESSAGE FROM  
THE DIRECTOR



I hope you find this annual book of statistics about Montana agriculture as invaluable as I have over the years. Information about Montana's crops, the number of acres planted and harvested, irrigation, livestock, national rankings, exports, prices and trends provide a lot of insights into the condition of our number one industry, its past and its future. Montana is more than a leading producer of wheat, barley and beef calves. Our producers are steadily increasing their production of alternative crops such as dry peas, lentils, flax and organics. Montana's diversified agriculture includes honey, sweet cherries, seed potatoes, mint and alfalfa seed. Growers are experimenting with oil seed crops for processing into specialty products and bio-fuels. More women have become the principal operators of farms and ranches in recent years – an increase of 27 percent in the latest Census of Agriculture compared to the 1997 census.

The numbers contained in this annual report have credibility because they are generated from detailed surveys that our Montana Agricultural Statistics Office conducts with producers from throughout the state. Updates are provided electronically and through news releases provided throughout the year.

Through careful consideration of our state's strengths and opportunities, Montana agricultural producers are leading the state into an exciting future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy K. Peterson".

Nancy K. Peterson, Director, Montana Department of Agriculture

NOTES FROM THE  
DIRECTOR



The USDA, NASS, Montana Field Office is pleased to publish the 42<sup>nd</sup> edition of *Montana Agricultural Statistics*. Montana's agricultural farmers and ranchers were blessed with moisture during 2005 that improved pastures and ranges, hay and grain production and people's general outlook. The agricultural sector continues to exceed two billion dollars and is a vital industry for Montana's economy. Among states, Montana ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in durum wheat production, 2<sup>nd</sup> in flaxseed production, 3<sup>rd</sup> in barley production, 3<sup>rd</sup> in other spring wheat, and 3<sup>rd</sup> in all wheat production. Thank you to Montana's farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses that made this publication possible through their willingness to provide basic agricultural information.

The USDA, NASS, Montana Field Office works in cooperation with the Montana Department of Agriculture, the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee, the Montana Alfalfa Seed Committee, Montana State University and many other producers' organizations to provide valuable agricultural information. Thanks to everyone who made this publication possible.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peggy Stringer".

Peggy Stringer, Director, USDA, NASS, Montana Field Office